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OneHolyoke receives funds to clean city streets

HOLYOKE — OneHolyoke CDC announced it has received \$2,000 of Community Development Block Grant funding to support its 2020 #KeepitClean2K20 Campaign in Holyoke's downtown neighborhoods.

ONEHOLYOKE, 6



Input needed for school return

HOLYOKE — The Holyoke Public Schools Reopening Leadership Team is planning for a successful return-to-school this fall. We are following the guidance issued by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, which is informed by public health and medical experts, teachers, district and school leaders, public officials and families. (Read DESE's Initial Fall School Reopening Memo.)

SCHOOL, 11



Sales tax-free holiday set for next month

BOSTON — Representative Nicholas Boldyga (R-Southwick) has announced that the annual sales tax-free weekend will take place the weekend of August 29-30. This marks the second sales tax holiday held under the new law signed by Governor Baker in 2018 that made the weekend an annual occurrence.

TAX-FREE, 12

Big turnout for annual catfish derby

By Shelby Macri
smacri@turley.com

HOLYOKE — The American Legion United Force Post 351 held their 40th annual Catfish Derby, it was held from Friday July 17, to Sunday July 19 at 2 p.m. The post raises money by selling tickets at \$10 each, this year the post sold 238 tickets which was one more than last.

Post members Jesse Garcia, Ray Dufresne, and Lisa Gariepy were on their six-hour shift on Saturday July 18, and spoke about the annual derby.

The Catfish Derby is used to raise money that the post uses to help disabled children, by buying specific equipment and other materials that will help each kid. Last year the Post was able to buy an all-terrain wheelchair for one kid, the wheel chair allows him to go onto the beach and any other surface that would be harder for normal wheel chair wheels.

This year's Catfish Derby was affected by COVID-19 along with many other yearly events, the Post was able to agree to safety guidelines that allowed the derby to continue.

"This is the fortieth year that we've done the Catfish Derby, and for a while there



From left; Jesse Garcia, Lisa Gariepy, and Ray Dufresne from the American Legion Post 351, hold the leader board for the 40th Annual Catfish Derby.

Photo by Shelby Macri

we didn't know if we'd be able to hold it." Post Commander Dufresne said. "I'm glad we had a big turnout, seeing as we sold the tickets two weeks before the event."

All of the post members split six-hour shifts, and the building stayed open continuously throughout the weekend. As most people get better catfish while fishing at night

and early morning. The biggest fish to beat on Saturday was fifteen pound and four ounces, as the biggest fish of the derby receives a grand cash price of three \$351 in honor of Post 351.

The post members have a cell phone that is dedicated to the derby, it's called the hotline and anyone participating can call the hotline and check out what the biggest

fish is. Sometime people who are fishing will call to see if their fish is big enough to be weighed, while other call just to check in because they are interested. The derby also includes a children's section where kids can bring in their catfish entries as well, the top five or so kids will receive a trophy for their fish. The kids

See DERBY, page 12

Children's Room providing great activities

By Shelby Macri
smacri@turley.com

HOLYOKE — The Holyoke Library's Children's Room is offering a few programs while the building is still closed to the public. Currently the Children's Room is offering curb-side-

pickup for book bundles, summer reading, and craft bundles. The website for the Children's Room is also updated and will be offering videos from performers that typically visit the library in person.

The Children's Librarian, Nathan Hayes, has been at

the library for ten years and expressed that though things are different the staff is working to keep things operational. "We don't have enough PPE's right now, we've ordered them but they're on back stock right now," Hayes said. "Once we have the PPE's and a safety plan in place, we'll be able to slowly open." The library currently has plastic partitions and people are wearing masks, but they'll need more supplies before fully opening. Hayes also said that people have been calling for the to go craft-kits, as well as book bundles.

"We're trying to encourage kids to keep reading, and while we have about 10 kids who pick up things every week, we know we can reach out to more people," Hayes said. The book bundles include a specific category like Sci-Fi or Fantasy, then staff members pick out books in that category for different age groups. Hayes explained that people interested can call the Library and ask for the



The Children's Room at the Holyoke Library is trying to encourage children to keep reading throughout the summer.

See ACTIVITIES, page 11

Mayor seeks free PVTA fairs during crisis

HOLYOKE — Holyoke Mayor Alex Morse is calling on the PVTA to extend their fare collection moratorium for the remainder of the Coronavirus crisis. The PVTA, which has been operating fare-free for two months, announced last week that they will be resuming fare collection beginning July 19.

"Resuming fare collection during the pandemic should be a last resort, and in light of the \$36.6 million in CARES funding received by the PVTA, I don't believe that reinstating fare collection is warranted. I am calling on PVTA leadership and my fellow Mayors and Town Managers who represent the 24 communities serviced by the PVTA, to support extending the moratorium on fare collection", said Mayor Morse.

Morse, who is a PVTA board member, is pointing to the minimal amount of revenue that comes from fares even during normal operations as

See PVTA, page 11

Eversource announces major rate drop for electric service

SPRINGFIELD – Eversource customers who are on the company's Basic Service Supply option are seeing savings on their electric bill after the Department of Public Utilities approved the energy company's proposed electricity supply rate that is nearly 23% lower than the previous rate. Eversource is also encouraging customers to closely manage their energy supply options so that they do not overpay an alternative supplier. Eversource secured the lower six-month price for customers thanks to a reduction in wholesale power prices. The rate took effect on July 1.

"We're pleased to be passing along a summertime price cut to our customers who get their electricity supply through our Basic Service option," said

Eversource Senior Vice President and Chief Customer Officer Penni Conner. "This reduction will come just in time to help customers who use air conditioning to cool their homes and businesses during the hottest days of the year. It will also help those customers experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19."

The supply rate is 9.020 cents per kilowatt-hour, down from the previous six-month rate of 11.666 cents per kilowatt-hour. The decrease will result in a monthly savings on the supply charge of \$14.55 for residential customers using an average of 550 kilowatt-hours of electricity.

As a regulated delivery company, Eversource purchases electricity from suppliers and passes on the cost, with

no profit added, directly to customers on the company's Basic Service supply option. All customers also have the option to purchase electricity from competitive suppliers. The Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities licenses competitive suppliers within the commonwealth and maintains a list of current offers available from them. Alternative supplier prices in Massachusetts have recently ranged from 6 cents per kilowatt-hour to 12 cents per kilowatt-hour. With its recently secured pricing of 9.020 cents per kilowatt-hour, Eversource encourages customers who choose a competitive supplier to review their bill.

Effective with the July 1 Basic Service supply price change, average monthly residential bills for 550 kilo-

watt-hours of electricity in Eversource's Eastern Massachusetts service area will go to \$119.69 from \$130.66, or a decrease of about 8.5% on the total bill.

Eversource reminds its customers that energy efficiency is the single most effective way to take control of their year-round energy costs.

"We're number one in the nation in energy efficiency. Even with the drop in the price of electricity, our customers can take advantage of deeper savings by making full use of the programs available to them," added Conner.

For energy efficiency tips and information about the many programs available to help lower energy use, Eversource customers can visit the Save Money & Energy section of Eversource.com.

Virtual walk to help NAMI

AGAWAM – The National Alliance on Mental Illness of Western Massachusetts will be holding its 20th Annual Walkathon Virtual Celebration, 'A Journey of Hope and Recovery' on Aug. 23, starting at 11 a.m.

The event is suitable for all ages and abilities and will directly benefit NAMI Western Massachusetts continuing efforts to help improve the lives of those individuals living with mental health conditions and their families.

NAMI is the National Alliance on Mental Illness, the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization. NAMI provides advocacy, education, support and public awareness so that all individuals

and families affected by mental illness can Build Better Lives.

Folks may help NAMI-WM's mission by participating in this Virtual Walk or by sponsoring the event. Anyone who would like to submit a brief video saying how NAMI-WM has helped them or a loved one or how they maintain good mental health during these difficult times, these would be most appreciated. Videos should be two minutes or less, and the deadline is Aug. 7. All entries should be emailed to information@namiwm.org.

For further information, contact NAMI's office at 413-786-9139 or visit www.namiwm.org/events for entry and sponsorship forms.

MBA elects officers, directors

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Bankers Association recently elected new officers and members to its Board of Directors, including Patrick J. Murray, president and CEO of Bristol County Savings Bank in Taunton, as board chair effective July 1.

Among those elected to the board is Steven E. Lowell, president and CEO of Monson Savings Bank, who will serve on the Board of Directors.

"This is a terrific group of individuals to lead our local banking industry as board members, as well as being significant executives in their own markets," said Daniel J. Forte, president and CEO of the MBA.

"We know that there are great opportunities ahead for our industry, as well as a fair share of challenges. Each of these new members of the board will provide considerable expertise and diverse talents, serving a very large consumer footprint."

The Massachusetts Bankers Association represents 130 commercial, savings, cooperative, and federal savings banks and savings and loan associations with approximately \$380 billion in local assets, 72,000 employees across Massachusetts and New England, and more than 2,000 banking locations. For more information, visit www.massbankers.org.

Utility urges not to ignore smell of gas

WESTBOROUGH – As part of its ongoing public awareness campaign, Columbia Gas of Massachusetts reminds the public what they can do to help prevent harm from gas leaks.

Columbia Gas of Massachusetts delivers natural gas to nearly 325,000 customers through an underground pipeline network of nearly 5,000 miles of gas mains and more than 260,000 gas services. While the largest single cause of pipeline failures is the result of homeowners and professional excavators damaging underground lines, natural gas leaks can also cause harm. Gas leaks may be caused by loose fittings, appliance connections, material failure, accidental damage or corrosion.

It is important to look, listen and smell to detect natural gas leaks and then take action.

The utility advises folks to watch for bubbling water or dirt blowing the ground near a natural gas line, as that may indicate the release of gas from an underground pipeline. If folks hear hissing, blowing or roaring sounds, such noises may be a sign of a safety hazard as well. Due to the odorless and colorless nature of natural gas, Columbia Gas

adds Mercaptan, which smells like rotten eggs. The presence of this odor is another warning sign of a potential hazard.

Those who smell "rotten eggs" or detect a natural gas leak are advised to immediately leave the area. When safely away from the location, dial 911 and Columbia Gas of Massachusetts at 800-525-8222.

Additionally, folks should warn others to avoid the area, leave doors and windows in their present condition and avoid using anything that could cause ignition, including lighters, cellphones and electrical switches. Folks should not operate pipeline valves or attempt to correct leaks themselves.

"At Columbia Gas of Massachusetts, providing safe reliable natural gas service is our top priority," said Martin Poulin, vice president and general manager. "Any person who smells 'rotten egg' or detects a potential leak should immediately leave the area and then call 911 and the gas company. By taking these steps we can keep Massachusetts a safe place to live and work."

To learn more about natural gas safety, visit www.ColumbiaGasMA.com.

MHA opens two recovery programs

SPRINGFIELD – MHA is opening two new GRIT residential recovery programs in Springfield and Holyoke. These homes join the first GRIT location in Springfield which opened in April 2019. GRIT homes are for adults who have both a substance use disorder and a moderate-to-severe mental health diagnosis. Significantly, the program at each GRIT home has been created to address the specific needs of a distinct population. The first home in Springfield is for adult men, the new Springfield home works with transition-aged young men ages 18 to 26, and the new Holyoke home focuses on and adult (18 years and older) LGBTQ+ population.

GRIT provides a safe, homelike environment where residents benefit from programming that is supportive, structured, and developmentally appropriate. Program staff includes experienced, licensed and highly-skilled case managers, psychiatrists, clinicians, recovery coaches and other members of MHA's recovery team, each selected because of their passion for working with the populations served in each of the new GRIT homes.

"In each GRIT residence, we have intentionally created an environment to serve the unique needs of each specific population," said Christine Palmieri, vice president, Division of Recovery and Housing for MHA. "For example, the path in life that leads someone to need the level of support provided in the Holyoke home has been influenced by their experiences as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. We created an environment to address and honor that path and those

experiences, to offer support and services that are not only trauma informed, but culturally relevant and empowering. When folks complete the program in Holyoke, they'll have the skills to thrive both as members of the LGBTQ+ community, as well as the larger community and they will be prepared to face the challenges that may bring, without using drugs or alcohol. In similar but distinct ways, each GRIT home is designed to address the unique needs of a specific population, either adult men, transition-aged young men or members of the LGBTQ+ community."

Palmieri emphasized that GRIT acknowledges that recovery is not a distinct event, or a finish line to be crossed. "Rather, people are continually recovering for the rest of their lives, and a co-occurring diagnosis can amplify the challenges. GRIT never hides these facts. Instead, GRIT provides each client with structure, opportunity and support to build inner strength, resiliency and perseverance to continue their journey. The homelike environments at GRIT locations emphasize daily living skills through activities such as cooking groups and menu planning, wellness through activities such as group exercise and nutrition education, career planning through vocational programming and employment search, and intentional engagement with nature and peer supports. We're here to help people build a plan for going back in the community bolstered and with the skills they need to be successful."

Referrals to GRIT can be made by contacting MHA at 844-MHA-WELL or GRIT@mhainc.org.

Blessed Sacrament School announces 4th Quarter Honor Roll 2019-2020

Grade 5

High Honors - Henry Geoffrey, Jane Kelly, Dominic Percy, Gianna Percy

Honors - Anthony Armstrong, Mila Dillard, Braydon Dunn, Neely Rondeau, Cole Wojnar

Commendations: Josephine Hicks

Puttick

Grade 7

High Honors - Emma Caproni
Honors - Siobhan Armstrong, Gracie Chesmore, Peter Pluta
Commendations - Molly Smith

Grade 8

High Honors - Kaylin Cabrini, Ava Tellier
Honors - Alexander Dumas, Victoria Kenyon, Lillian Nadler, Anna Puttick, Nicholas Sobon

Rick's Place to offer free grief support

WILBRAHAM – Children and families who have experienced the loss of a loved one are invited to participate in virtual peer groups to take place in late August, facilitated by the nonprofit Rick's Place. The peer groups are designed for children, teens and their caregivers.

Rick's Place, named for Rick

Thorpe, a Wilbraham native and Minnechaug Regional High School graduate who died in the Tower Two collapse of the World Trade Center on 9/11, offers peer-supported bereavement services for children who have experienced death. For more information or to schedule a virtual intake meeting, visit ricksplacema.org or call 413-279-2010.

Virtual Women's Leadership Luncheon series starts July 29

HOLYOKE — Holyoke Community College president Christina Royal and Amanda Sbriscia, HCC vice president of Institutional Advancement, will kick off a reimaged monthly Women's Leadership Luncheon Series on Wed., July 29.

The 2020 Women's Leadership Luncheon Series, postponed from spring due to COVID-19, will now take place virtually over Zoom on the last Wednesdays of July, August, September and October from 12 noon to 1 p.m.

The series is sponsored by HCC and Training and Workforce Options – TWO – a collaboration between Holyoke and Springfield Technical community colleges.

"Women leaders and up-and-comers will be joined by panels of like-mind-

ed women each month for small group discussions and open dialogue," said Tracy Whitfield, TWO's director of Business Development. "Participants will have the opportunity to form a supportive network of women leaders, discuss topics of interest and enjoy a brown bag lunch, virtually. Professional development, networking and socialization over a delicious meal – does it get any better?"

Each lunch-time event will feature two presenters leading discussions on dif-



Amanda Sbriscia



Christina Royal

ferent topics:

July 29: "Leading Through Change" – Christina Royal (president, Holyoke Community College) and Amanda Sbriscia (vice president of Institutional Advancement,

Holyoke Community College; executive director, HCC Foundation).

Aug. 26: "Empowering Women in the Workplace" – Denise Jordan (executive director, Springfield Housing Authority) and Julie Quink (managing

partner, Burkhardt, Pizzanelli PC).

Sept. 30: "Comfortable in Your Own Skin, Finding Your Voice" – Tanisha Arena (executive director, Arise for Social Justice) and Pam Victor (owner, Happy Valley Comedy Theater).

Oct. 28: "Women Leaders in Non-Traditional Businesses" – Colleen Loveless (president and CEO, Revitalize Community Development Corporation) and Nicole Palange (vice president, V&F Auto).

The July 29 session is free. The remaining three sessions are \$20 each, or \$50 for the full series.

Registration is required. Space for each luncheon is limited to 25. To register, please go to: hcc.edu/womens-leadership.

Opposition continues toward Tennessee Gas pipeline expansion

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – An Agawam attorney is requesting the attorney general of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to file an amicus brief in response to the Tennessee Gas Pipeline's proposal to expand.

The expansion includes adding a 2.1-mile natural gas pipeline loop.

To accomplish this, the gas company would have to dig up farmland, wetlands, and other wooded areas.

According to her letter, which represents the views of Attorney Susan Grossberg and fellow resident Nancy Bobskill, she is concerned with the effects of global warming and the lack of action to prevent or reserve overheating of the planet.

"Thus, we were very encour-

aged to read about your petition to the DPU to open an investigation into the future of the natural gas industry in Massachusetts," Grossberg states. "Most relevant to us is your recognition that the heating sector must make sizeable reductions in its use of fossil fuels to achieve Massachusetts's legally binding statewide limit of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, and that to do so gas distribution companies must be required to make significant changes to their planning processes and business model."

"Nancy and I both live a few miles from the proposed Tennessee Gas expansion project (the "261 Upgrade Project") which includes digging up farmland, woods and wetlands to install a 2.1 mile natural gas pipeline loop. Especially concerning is that a proposed Alternate Backfeed from Agawam to Holyoke,

which was to be enabled by this pipeline loop, has been cancelled.

"Although FERC issued a December 19, 2019 Order certifying the pipeline loop as a 'public convenience and necessity,' a dissenting commissioner, Richard Glick, stated that FERC "refuse[d] to consider the consequences its actions have for climate change." See page 1, paragraph 1 of the Glick Dissent starting on Page 43 of the attached Order. Fortunately, Food & Water Watch has filed the above referenced Petition For Review to the DC Circuit challenging the FERC Order on this basis.

The Commonwealth has the right to file an amicus brief without leave of court or any party under Rule 29(a)(2) of the Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure. As citizens of the Commonwealth, we implore you to file an amicus brief in support of the Petition

For Review and demand that FERC be mandated to consider the effects on climate change in its decision regarding construction of this pipeline loop and all fossil fuel distribution projects in the Commonwealth."

An Amicus brief is defined as a statement submitted by "someone who is not a party to a case who assists a court by offering information, expertise, or insight that has a bearing on the issues in the case. The decision on whether to consider an amicus brief lies within the discretion of the court."

The gas pipeline has seen different forms of opposition during the past few years as Tennessee has sought to expand its service pipelines. Among the opposition has been area residents, the City of Northampton, and other concerned parties that have emerged since the gas explosions in Lawrence and Andover.

Local Students make UMass-Amherst Spring 2020 Dean's List

AMHERST – Below is a list of local students who were named to the dean's list at the University of Massachusetts Amherst for the spring 2020 semester.

In order to qualify, an undergraduate student must receive a 3.5 grade-point average or better on a four-point scale.

Alexis Elizabeth Alicea, Samuel R Allen, Caroline Margaret Callahan, Daniel John Callahan, Melina Guyott Canter, Katheryn Margaret Chandler, Jacques Richard Courchesne, Marshall Joseph Crescentini, James Curtin, Joseph Vincent D'Addario, Michael Joseph Dunn, Edwin Ivan Encarnacion

Jr, Alyssa Garcia, Kathleen Hoang Giang, Austin Arthur Guilmain, Elizabeth Hayden, James Patrick Hobert III, Aaron Michael Hohol, Devan Robert Kane, Robert Thomas Kass, Joseph A. Kochapski, Emily YiRun Mainville, Rachael Alyse Marion, Margaret Ann McAndrew, Jared Allen McPherson, Rija Niazi, Kevin William O'Sullivan, Sophia Lina Papulis, Vraj Dixitkumar Patel, Sadie Eleanor Pecia, Amanda Robare, Wilona Ryan, Sarah Sirkissoon, Noah Spady, Kiara Quashawn Spells, Olivia Grace Stauder, Fernando Tenesaca Jr, Alexa Naya Vargas, Ryan Walsh.

United Way of Pioneer Valley distributes food to those in need

SPRINGFIELD – The United Way of Pioneer Valley announced that beginning June 30, it began the distribution of hundreds of boxes of shelf-stable food items to partner agencies to help clients in need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The food boxes were secured through United Way's relationship with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency as they distribute resources throughout the commonwealth.

The first truckload arrived June 30

at the United Way headquarters at 1441 Main St. in Springfield.

"We are honored to play a part in the commonwealth's COVID-19 response efforts," Paul Mina, United Way of Pioneer Valley president and CEO, said.

"We have worked with MEMA closely in their relief efforts for Hampden County and are happy to continue to help."

For more information about the United Way or to get involved, visit uwpv.org.

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guest column

Time to learn the system from the inside

By Lee H. Hamilton

I've spent a long time in politics, and over those years one thing has remained constant: There are a lot more Americans who criticize government than there are who serve and do something about it.

I'll admit, there have been times when I've felt a bit resentful. It's hard to enter the fray, be expected to listen patiently to criticism from all comers, and then look around to find that many of them are nowhere to be found when it comes to the hard work of improving our communities and our system.

But far more than annoyance, what I've felt is amazement at the immense but often un-grasped opportunity our system offers. This is especially acute these days, as millions of Americans take to the streets and to social media with passionate intensity, driven by deeply-held beliefs or newfound conviction and a sense that it's time to weigh in. I agree — but then, I think it's always time to weigh in. That's what our system asks of us as citizens. And in particular, I'd argue that it asks us to do it from the inside, not just from the outside.

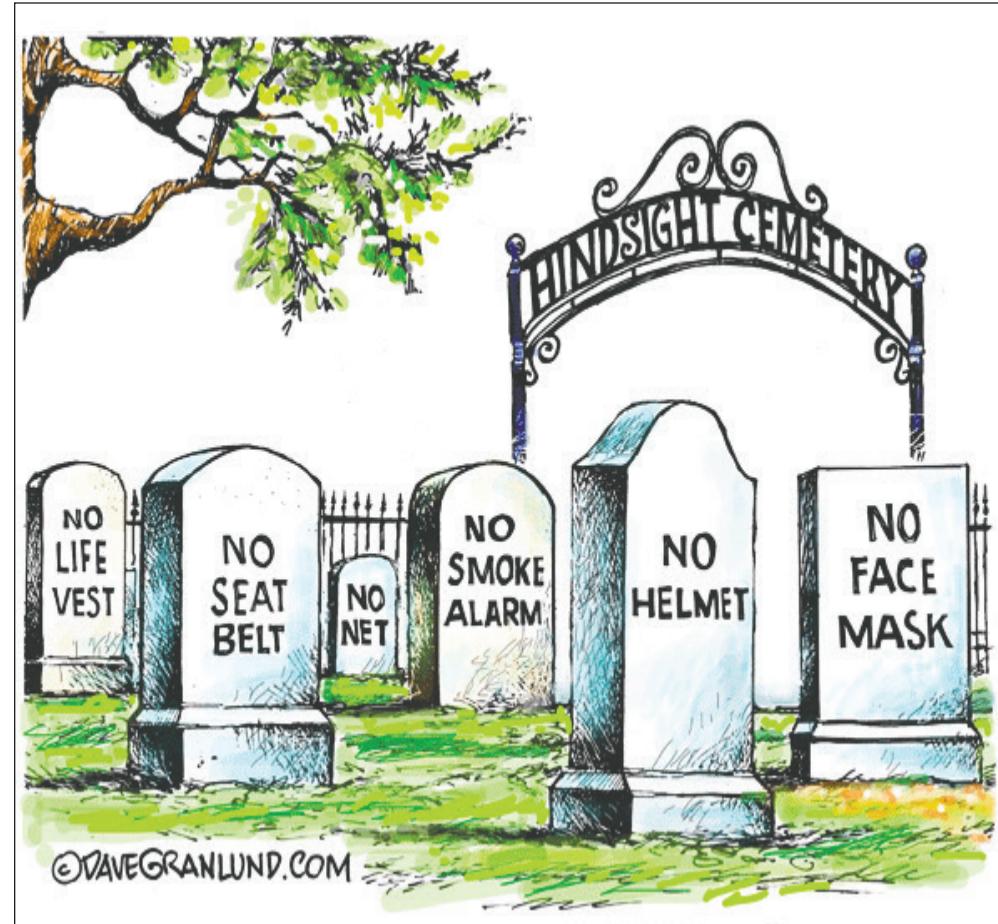
We desperately need citizens to enter the public arena — people who are not afraid to plunge in and try to improve our democratic institutions. To be sure, critics and ordinary engaged citizens have an important role to play in shaping the public discourse. But if at some point in their lives they and others do not also see a duty to serve, our nation is in trouble.

I know the arguments you can find against it. You have to compromise your values. It's thankless. The system turns you into a cog. You make yourself a target of scrutiny. You can't actually accomplish anything.

To all of this, I say: So? There is no question that our governing institutions need improving. But it's not going to happen unless people with the power to change them roll up their sleeves and set about doing so. And those people are the ones inside those institutions, who've learned how they work and who understand that actual change happens by dint of legislation, administration, and the nitty-gritty details of reform.

There are plenty of other things you can do, too: vote, spend time learning the issues you care about, make informed judgments about your elected representatives, get involved in organizations that advocate for the causes you value. But as writer Andy Smarick put it recently in "The Bulwark," "[G]overning is formative. Knocking on doors as a candidate is not just about winning votes. Sitting through a long bill hearing is not just about following the legislative process. Taking part in public debates is not just about self-expression. Making a tough governing decision is not just about resolving a

See SYSTEM, page 5



Letters to the Editor

Morse's numbers are wrong

Dear Editor:

I have received campaign literature from Mayor Morse which I find to be filled with hypocrisy based on the facts.

The most hypocritical statement he makes is that as mayor he raised graduation rates by 47%. This is certainly a false statement. Since 2015, the city's schools have been in receivership, and the mayor has had little influence.

Even prior to that, the mayor many times, if not a majority of the times, failed to even attend school committee meetings, despite being chairman.

Second, he wants to take credit for reducing unemployment in half, but was this something he did as mayor, or the national trend. When he took office, Holyoke's unemployment rate was 9.5% and as of January 1 this year it was 5.0%. However, if you look at national trends, the unemployment rate in 2012 was 8.3%, and as of January of this year, it was reduced to 3.6%. Therefore, while Holyoke's rate has indeed gone down by 47.36%, it is lower than the national average, which went down 56.62%. The facts would seem to indicate that Holyoke's employment rate has improved, but by less than the national average, so should we instead blame the mayor.

Third, the mayor gains some credit for transitioning Holyoke to more clean energy, but it was a trend begun before his tenure in office. While only 51% was clean energy

in 1995, by 2002 that number was 64%, and 70% in 2012 the year the mayor took office. It should also be noted that one of his energy initiatives, a moratorium on natural gas will have an economic impact on energy consumption, now and in the future. Transferring to electric from natural gas will mean an additional expense three times more expensive. Electric rates for a million BTU's is currently \$39.26 while for the same consumption, natural gas is \$12.52.

Lastly, the mayor criticizes Congressman Neal for not holding any in-person town hall meetings. It is almost unethical for him to criticize anyone else for attendance at meetings, since his record has been exceptionally poor.

When the city had just gone through a difficult ballot question on a debt exclusion for schools, a community meeting was called for to discuss what should be done next. As the leader of the city, and with a chance to try to unite the city towards one vision, the mayor was again absent.

When we had two murders back to back in South Holyoke and Churchill, community meetings were called at both Lawrence and Morgan schools. Despite the anxiety in the city and especially in those neighborhoods, and again looking for leadership, the mayor again could not be bothered to attend.

Terence Murphy
Holyoke Ward 2 City Councilor

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A Quote

OF NOTE

"Life is
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what happens
to me and
90 percent
of how
I react to it."

Charles Swindoll

Letters to the Editor Policy

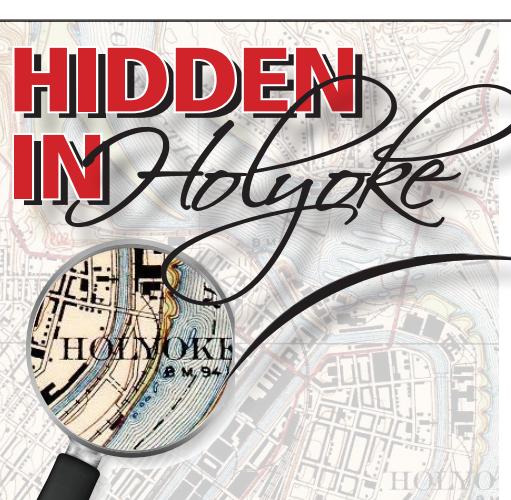
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Unsigned or anonymous letters will NOT be published.

We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions. Libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks or defamation of character are not allowed.

Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon.

Please email (preferred) letters to thesun@turley.com. Mailed letters can be sent to *The Sun*, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.



Each week, *The Holyoke Sun* will feature a photo of a distinctive place, landmark, sculpture, sign or other recognizable object located somewhere in the city.

Think you know what or where it is? Readers are encouraged to submit their guesses to "Hidden in Holyoke" via email to TheSun@Turley.com. In order to qualify for the weekly contest, entries must be received by Wednesday at noon for inclusion into Friday's edition. Please include your full name with your guess in an email to TheSun@turley.com. If more than one correct answer is received, the names of all those who submitted guesses will be listed. For more information, contact *The Holyoke Sun* at 413-283-8398.



Last week's
"Hidden in Holyoke"
was a handball wall
at Springdale Park.

Options for Lynch School not positive

Dear Editor:

On July 14, the Planning Board was asked to look at the latest Colvest Group scheme to demolish Lynch Middle School and in its place construct a strip mall.

There is no positive spin for the Lynch site development "story."

The city is selling one of its few prestigious mid-century Modern buildings for a mere \$250,000 to a developer with a history of contentious relations in communities where it has built commercial plazas. The external walls of Lynch are filled with asbestos which the demolition will unavoidably release into the surrounding environment. Yet another bank will be placed on the grounds. Years later, another undetermined commercial structure will be built. The Highlands and Oakdale will be stuck for years with property that generates minimal taxes and physically divides two very walkable neighborhoods. Instead, we will have a perilous exit and entrance onto Rte. 141 and an ominous sea of asphalt similar to, but larger than, the desolate Rite-Aid Plaza across the street, also owned by Colvest Group.

A determined citizens' group stopped the destruction of Lynch supposedly for good. But we continue to ask why, when were other bids on the table, they were not entertained,

even though they were higher and not involving the demolition of the building. We can only guess the reasons.

The 2019 proposal for two new middle schools failed because Holyoke citizens voted against raising taxes to pay for the loan to build them. The campaign and timing were horrible for everybody, creating tensions among neighbors and even friends.

The campaign in favor of the new schools seemed to say: "If you are not on board it's because you don't care about Holyoke children." The campaign against not only raised financial concerns, but warned against a renewed segregation problem in Holyoke schools. It proposed an alternative: instead of building two schools for \$160,000,000 with about \$80,000,000 from government grants, why not restore Lynch Middle School for \$40,000,000 or \$50,000,000, with about \$30,000,000 in state grants?

There was also a huge elephant in the two new open-plan schools. In 1981 Holyoke had two middle schools that were notoriously segregating the ethnic populations of the city. A judge had to order a desegregation ruling.

Now that we are in the middle of a pandemic, a recession and with a real threat that the major source of our tax income, the Holyoke Mall, may go under, we might be relieved that the

school project did not pass. The possibility of refurbishing Lynch, including a well-designed addition, is an affordable alternative.

Buffalo PS#195
<https://hhlarchitects.com/portfolio/buffalo-public-school-no-195-city-honors/>

Cornell Physical Science building
<http://koetterkim.com/indexFlash.html>

The Wythe Hotel in Brooklyn
<https://wythehotel.com/>

It would create a story of smart development and intelligent commitment to a safe, well-rounded education for all kids.

Such a plan is also better than a plan to demolish Peck and construct an entirely new school. The greenest building is always the one that is refurbished. With its southern exposure, big windows and thick, well-insulated walls, Lynch, whose flat roof can host solar panels, was green from the start, a building for the ages.

Our "booming" city must prove that it is rational, fiscally responsible and socially minded. The destruction of Lynch cannot be the manifestation of Holyoke today. Please join in to protest the reconsideration of the denied Colvest plan.

Paola Ferrario
Holyoke

Common questions regarding tomatoes, shrubs and more

This is a common question about the cracks that often occur on tomatoes: "most of the fruit have circular cracks, almost all the way around, up near the stem end. Is this a disease or nutrient deficiency?"

Neither! What you are describing are growth cracks. Tomatoes generally crack when a drought period is followed by lots of rain. Cracks tend to be worse if the weather has been hot. The tomatoes on two of the nine plants I am growing in my vegetable garden are exhibiting this problem as well. Some varieties tend to be more "crack tolerant" than others, and are labeled as such in seed catalogs. To prevent future cracks, be sure to water on a regular basis. Don't be afraid to eat damaged fruit; while they aren't pretty, they are edible. More prone to rot, however, so use them quickly.

Autumnal sunflowers

A perennial aficionado from Brimfield is curious about the autumnal sunflower (*Helenium autumnale*), otherwise known as Sneezeweed. "I absolutely love this plant for the late season color that it adds to my perennial border. My only problem is that it is too tall. I have pinched back perennial asters for years with success. Can this same technique be



IN THE GARDEN
ROBERTA MCQUAID
 TURLEY PUBLICATIONS COLUMNIST

used to make a stouter clump of Sneezeweed?"

It certainly can. Like you, I love everything about Sneezeweed, except for its height, which can top off at four feet! It is a native plant, which is not bothered by insects or diseases to speak of, has lovely long-lasting yellow or rusty orange flowers and despite what its name implies, doesn't make you sneeze. Years ago I experimented with reducing the height of my own plants and pinched them back twice. They were about 18 inches shorter at bloom time than they would have been and still flowered abundantly. Next year try it for yourself. When the plant is about a foot tall, remove the top few nodes of each shoot. Repeat the pinching process a couple of weeks later, finishing by the end of June. This will give the plant ample time to grow to a respectable height and initiate buds in time for its debut come August.

Yew bushes

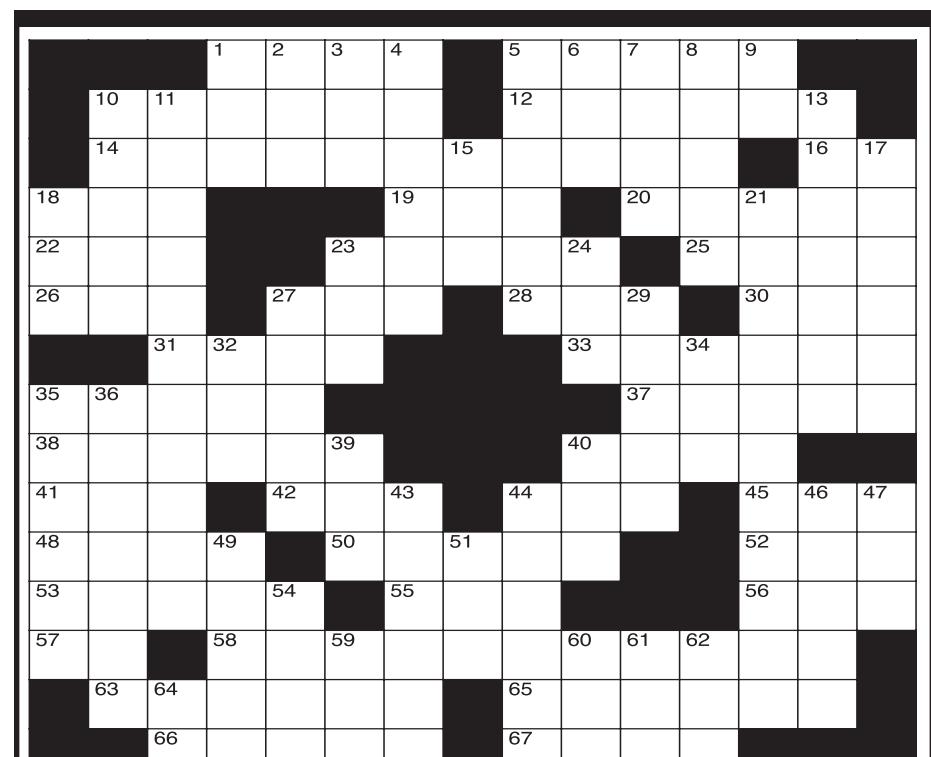
"I have some yews growing along the foundation of my house. They are the perfect size right now, but I am worried they will get out of hand. Do you have any pruning tips to pass along?"

Sure! For this job you will need a pair of hand clippers, not hedge trim-

mers. New growth is obvious: it is very flexible, lighter in color and extends several inches from the shrub's silhouette. With clippers in hand, grab a branch, and

instead of removing just the new growth, make a cut well within the body of the

See GARDEN, page 9



CLUES ACROSS

1. One-time world power 41. Cashless payment interface (abbr.)

5. Central Florida city 42. Pouch

10. Winged nut 44. Peter's last name

12. Elevate spiritually 45. Inclined

14. Creative 48. Palestinian territory

16. It cools your home 49. Strip

18. Woman (French) 50. A type of syrup

19. "60 Minutes" network 52. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!

20. Old World lizard 53. Weather Underground

22. Swiss river 55. Run batted in

23. Ethnic group of 56. Frozen water

Cambodians 57. Sodium

25. Abba ___, Israeli 58. Philly specialty

politician 63. Cuts the wool off

26. Tire measurement 65. Rules

27. Affirmative 66. Icelandic literary

28. Thrust horse power 67. Works

(abbr.) 30. One point north of 31. A type of "pet"

due east 33. Tech giant

35. European nation

37. Fencing swords

38. Acquired

3. Conscientious investment approach (abbr.)

4. Ranch (Spanish)

5. Beginning

6. Index

7. Portuguese wine

8. A feudal superior

9. Military brach (abbr.)

10. Lithuanian given name

11. A way to become different

13. Able to be domesticated

15. Defensive nuclear weapon

17. Hosts film festival

18. Shows you how to get there

21. Arranged alphabetically

23. S. Thai isthmus

24. The 17th letter of the Greek alphabet

27. Woods

29. Make yourself attractive

32. Concealed

34. Large primate

35. A favorite saying of a sect or political group

36. Tropical fruits

39. Obstruct

40. Car mechanics group

43. Stroke gently

44. They're in your toolbox

46. Throns

47. One and only

49. In a way, bent

51. "Downton Abbey" broadcaster

54. Herring-like fish

59. A major division of geological time

60. Vast body of water

61. Cannister

62. Encourage

64. The man

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 9

SYSTEM, from page 4

policy matter. Through these activities, the public servant listens to fellow citizens, learns of competing priorities, and witnesses principles in conflict."

In our democracy, these and other skills are vital, not just for public officials, but for any citizen who wants to be involved in the community. Listening to our peers, understanding their hopes, appreciating the differences among them, grasping why accommodation and compromise are crucial to resolving those differences, and learning how to accomplish them are part and parcel of making a representative democracy work. People who do this feel in their bones how hard it is to govern in a large, diverse republic, and why we depend on large numbers of ordinary people to step forward, find their

niche, and participate on town boards, in state legislatures, and in Congress.

So, as I look about at the remarkable levels of public engagement in this intense political year, I find myself hoping that more comes out of it than simple public pressure. I hope that people who'd never considered it before decide it's time to step forward, serve in public office, and help their fellow citizens make this a better country.

Lee Hamilton is a senior advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar at the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice at the IU O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

Pass 'Death with dignity' bill

Dear Editor:

The "End of Life Options Act" is being considered by a second legislative committee after it was passed on May 29 by the Public Health Committee. It simply provides a person with a terminal illness the option of legally bringing closure to his/her life. There is nothing mandatory about it, but it would give those who wish an opportunity to take charge of their end of life.

As someone who has worked in a nursing home, and someone who is presently at 73 very aware of her own not too distant demise, I have observed the unnecessary suffering of some people in their last months, and I fear it for myself.

It is simply not true that all pain can be alleviated, and all emotional distress can be resolved. Most people are less afraid of death than of what they might have to go through to get there.

Many Springfield-area legislators are supporters and co-sponsors of this bill. Please join me in contacting the Co-Chairs of the HealthCare Financing Committee: Rep. Daniel Cullinan (617-722-2430) and Sen. Cindy Friedman (617-722-1432). Urge them to pass this bill before the Legislature adjourns on July 31.

Patricia Rackowski
Holyoke

In The News

ONEHOLYOKE, from page 1

OneHolyoke has taken a leadership position in cleaning Holyoke streets for the past two years by organizing weekly clean-ups from Spring to Summer. Keepitclean2K18 and Keepitclean2K19 created great relationships with community members taking responsibility in cleaning their streets.

OneHolyoke Community Development Corporation, a nonprofit organization, will be hosting

a cleaning campaign again. Starting Saturday July 25, 2020 at 10 a.m. from the Flats Community Building, 43 Canal Street in Holyoke, OneHolyoke will host one clean-up at the Flats Community Building, every forth Saturday of the month through September. We will support an additional three to four cleanups a month with several community partners. Holyoke organizations are encouraged to volunteer to host their own cleaning events. We will provide and have readily available cleaning supplies and tools for other partners hosting their own clean-up. Weekly neighbor-

hood clean ups will run through the Fall, with an end goal of #KeepItClean2K20 city wide cleanup event on September 26, 2020.

According to Nayroby Rosa-Soriano, OneHolyoke Director of Community Engagement and Resident Services, "The city of Holyoke's residents enjoys taking care of their streets and providing support to clean certain problem areas."

Nayroby said, "Last year we had over 15 partners organize a clean-up and over one hundred folks participate."

The campaign will specifically focus on cleaning streets in Holyoke. Holyoke residents may participate individually by cleaning their yard, sweeping their steps, or raking leaves. While doing so, take a minute, snap a photo and share on social media platforms, Facebook, Instagram, & Twitter, using the hashtag #KeepItClean2K20. developing an awesome collage of community cleaning assisting, furthering the mission of #KeepItClean2k20 of inspiring a sense of ownership throughout the city. hashtag #KeepItClean2K20 is a way of keeping the community connected throughout the initiative, allowing residents or partners to participate at their own convenience.

We ask that anyone who wishes to participate in any sort of spring, summer or fall cleaning, please share a photo with #KeepItClean2K20. For more information, for supplies, for support, or to be included in the hosting rotation, please contact Community Engagement Director Nayroby Rosa-Soriano of OneHolyoke CDC at 413-409-2004, or via email at nayroby.rosa-soriano@oneholyoke.org

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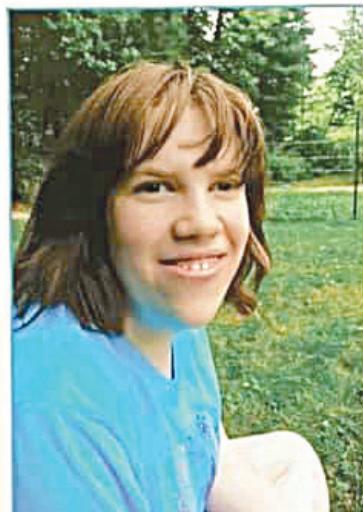
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Rev 'Em up for Rachele

You Could win a 2019 Harley Davidson Electra Glide Motorcycle



**Tickets are \$100 Each
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Motorcycle will be raffle on August 22, 2020, after our Famous Poker Run and Chicken Babecue which starts and ends at St. Stans Polish Club on South Street in West Warren, Massachusetts. The Poker Run (\$20 pp includes Chicken Barbecue) is sold separately from the motorcycle tickets.

We are sponsoring these benefits to honor and remember Rachele Ann Beer. Rachele passed away on October 9, 2019, at age 35. After bravely fighting cancer. This impressive motorcycle was purchased to be raffled to raise funds to help save Rachele's life. We have had to shift gears since her passing. Rachele attended the Center of Hope for many years. Her family would appreciate the proceeds in Rachele's memory to be applied to purchase needed items for her peers, such as sensory equipment, ipads and music related items at the Center of Hope. We will also be making a donation to Clowning for Kidz Foundation for their help in assistance in the raffles.

Sincerely,
The Beer Family of Spencer



COVID-19: Ways to Protect Your Health, Combat Loneliness & Ease Social Isolation

PRESENTED BY: JOAN ROCHE, PH.D., RN, GCNS-BC

Join us for this free presentation as we explore ways to improve your overall quality of life during COVID-19 and beyond. In these sessions we will provide helpful information and tips to remain healthy and be prepared.

**Day Brook Village is proud to be COVID-19 Free!
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**Wednesday, July 29th
12:00 pm – 1:30 pm OR 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm**

**Thursday, July 30th
12:00 pm – 1:30 pm OR 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm**

OR - Join us virtually on Zoom:

**Friday, July 31st
1:00 pm – 2:00 pm (RSVP for login information)**

**To reserve your space and select your preferred session,
kindly visit www.RSVPDayBrookVillage.org by July 24th.**

*As safety is our #1 priority, all in-person sessions will follow CDC and Massachusetts Department of Public Health guidelines, and the number of guests will be limited to allow for proper social distancing. All in-person attendees must wear a mask while on campus. Additional information pertaining to our practices to maintain a safe environment for all guests will be provided upon registration.



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Will high schools be able to play fall sports?

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION – Earlier this year, the high school and college sports worlds were ruined by the cancellation of all spring sports at each level, ranging up through Division 1 schools, and professional sports.

There always seemed to be an optimism at the time that sports would be able to resume without an issue this fall and at the high school level in Massachusetts, athletic directors planned a fall schedule, much like they do each spring as most schedules are made out a season in advance.

But as the summer rages on next to no activity and sports like soccer and football banned (for having games) despite Massachusetts' improved situation compared to the rest of the country, now fall sports seem to be in doubt.

Several New England colleges and universities have declared that fall sports are postponed due to the recent spikes throughout the rest of the country and concerns over interstate travel and the lack of a vaccine which guarantees the stop of an overwhelming spread of COVID-19.

Massachusetts, as of last week, still maintains a positive test rate of less than 2 percent, but the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association is still having to

consider the potential impact of allowing high school athletes back on fields, especially with soccer and football contests barred at the amateur level.

The ban does not specifically affect high school players, and the MIAA is working with the governor's office on guidance.

The MIAA's board of directors, which recently changed some of its membership around due to re-district-

See SPORTS, page 8



With football currently banned at the amateur level, will Western Mass. high school football commence in September?

File photos



Field hockey could be a sport that could resume as it was not on the governor's list of "at-risk" activities.



Soccer was barred for the summer, with the PVSSL canceling its season. MIAA officials are discussing this week whether soccer can be played this fall.

Robie gets win in modified race, Sonhalter captures mini-stock battle

WINCHESTER, N.H. – Brian Robie (Sunapee, NH) topped a big field of NHSTRA Modifieds Saturday, July 18, charging from row four to score

his first win of the season at Monadnock Speedway. Hillary Renaud (Vernon, VT), meanwhile, led all the way to earn her first season victory in the

ultra-competitive Street Stocks.

And, while Renaud was busy scoring her first victory lane celebration, Late Model Sportsman star Aaron Fellows (Croydon, VT) stayed perfect on the year, using a late-race pass to overcome his strongest challenge of the summer en route to victory lane. Vermont pilot Matt Sonhalter (White River Junction, VT) wired the nightcap 50-lap Mini Stock event.

There are few sounds in life that come close to that made by a big field of Modifieds thundering atop the blacktop in pursuit of Saturday night glory. That thunder is heard week-



Brian Robie came out on top in the NHSTRA Modified race.

Submitted photo

See RACING, page 8

MASCAC suspends fall sports programs

WESTFIELD – Westfield State University athletics announced that the Owls will not have inter-collegiate competition for fall sports teams in the Fall 2020 season, in conjunction with the announcement from the league's Council of Presidents on Thursday, July 16, 2020 that the entire Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference (MASCAC) will not compete in fall sports programs.

The Owls' fall sports teams (football, men's and women's soccer, field hockey, volleyball, men's and women's cross country and men's and women's golf) will have

the ability to practice on campus while utilizing the NCAA Resocialization of Sport Guidelines.

"I am extremely disappointed to have to announce to our student-athletes and families that our fall season teams will not have the opportunity to play inter-collegiate games this fall," said athletics director Richard Lenfest, Jr. "The COVID-19 pandemic has had an extreme impact on public health, and ultimately we need to take the steps that best protect the health of our student athletes and their loved ones in limiting the opportunity to spread

See MASCAC, page 8



Matt Sonhalter picks up the win in the mini-stock race

Submitted photo



Aaron Fellows was a winner in the Late Model Sportsman race.

RACING, from page 7

ly at Monadnock Speedway, where, Saturday, Matt Kimball and Rob Richardi led the 18-car Modified field to battle.

Kimball, gunning to turn a season-long hard luck run around, jumped all over the lead as the 40-lapper went green. Richardi stayed glued to his bumper, with defending track king Todd Patnode quickly entering the hunt.

By lap ten, Patnode held the deuce spot, while two-time 2020 winner Ben Byrne was rocketing up to third. Coming from row five, Byrne took the three-spot on lap 14 but he and Patnode's battle would be a short one. Coming quickly onto a cloud of lappers on lap 18, the potent pair came together, ending Patnode's night early for the second week in a row and sending Byrne to the rear.

The turn-one tangle brought Robie alongside Kimball on the restart and, two laps later, he had the point, then dashing off to victory just ahead of the second-generation hot shoe, with Byrne charging back through the pack to finish third on the night. Robie's victory moved him to the top of the points parade.

The Curtis twins, Chase and Jaret, did all they could to keep Hillary Renaud from taking her first career Street Stock victory lap but, on this night, the Vernon, VT. driver could not be stopped.

Chase Curtis was all over her back bumper for most of the race, sometimes even bumping it, without finding a path to the point, while brother Jaret did the same due diligence in his shadow. With the white flag in the air, Jaret rocketed low through turn two to claim the deuce, then watching Renaud flash under the checkers just ahead of him. Chris Buffone was fourth on the night, and Mike Radzuik rounded out the top five.

Cole Littlewood did something Saturday that nobody else had accomplished so far this season, outrun Aaron Fellows for 21 laps in the LMS feature. Piloting the Steve Brelio ride, Littlewood kept Fellows in his shadow until the Croydon pilot took a wheels-length advantage on lap 22, and then soared off to victory.

Robert Hagar powered into second on the white flag lap, with Littlewood

completing his strong night's work in third. The victory was Fellows' second of the weekend and kept him undefeated this season.

Matt Sonhalter was in the house Saturday to hunt for victory in the 50-lap Mini Stock main event, the first leg of the regional 2020 Battle for The Belt series. And while the speedway's weekly racing series drivers did well, nobody could catch the speedy Sonhalter.

Nathan Wenzel and Jared Soucy were frequently closest to Sonhalter, but it was 2019 track champ Louie Maher II who came closest at the end. Firing from way back in row eight, Maher methodically charged forward, getting past potent Gordon Farnum late to claim the runner-up hardware. Farnum's third place run moved him back atop the hometrack points parade.

Next Saturday, July 25, the thundershaking NEMA Midgets and NEMA Lites will join the Monadnock Speedway weekly racing series divisions for an exciting night of racing on the high banks. Advanced General Admission Tickets are available. For more information, please visit www.monadnockspeedway.com.

Monadnock Speedway July 18, 2020 results:

NHSTRA MODIFIEDS: Brian Robie, Matt Kimball, Ben Byrne, Trevor Bleau, Anthony Bello, Solomon Brow, Rob Richradi, Kim Rivet, Keith Carzello, Kevin Pittsinger, Brian Crunden, Jason Houle, Jerry Gomarla, Eric Leclair, Cory Plummer, Cameron Houle, Scott MacMichael, Todd Patnode

MINI STOCK (50-lap Battle for The Belt): Matt Sonhalter, Louie Maher, Gordon Farnum, Dan Sweeney, Nathan Sweeney, Kevin Clayton, Billy Chaffee, Joshua Hubbard, Tim Leblanc, Jeff Asselin, Shelby Avery, Haydon Grenier, Jake Puchalski, Jared Soucy, Andrew Harmon, Kevin McKnight, Kevin Russell, Bobby Kirker, Pat Houle

STREET STOCK: Hillary Renaud, Jaret Curtis, Chase Curtis, Chris Buffone, Mike Radzuik, Chris Riendeau, Tim Wenzel, Bryan Granger, Paul Barnard, Ben Williams

LATE MODEL SPORTSMAN: Aaron Fellows, Robert Hagar, Cole Littlewood, Camdyn Curtis, Justin Littlewood, Willie Kuhn, Nancy Munro, Chris Ballas, Scott Beck

Organisak defeats Maccario for Mass. Amateur title

MARION – Sudbury native Matthew Organisak, 22, has defeated Waltham's Nick Maccario, 28, by a score of 2 up to capture the 112th Massachusetts Amateur title in Friday's 36-hole championship match at The Kittansett Club in Marion.

This is the first state amateur win for Organisak, who represents Nashawtuc CC in Concord and recently graduated Emory University in Atlanta. Mike Ohanian, the 1968 champion, is the only other person to win it while representing Nashawtuc. Organisak also won the 2019 Francis Ouimet Memorial Tournament, also a Mass Golf championship.

Organisak joins Patrick Frodigh (2018) and Ben Spitz (2006) as the only left-handed golfers to win it since 2000.

Match Summary: The first 18 holes ended in a tie, with both men winning five holes. Organisak won four of the first six holes over the next 18 holes and never trailed. He birdied the 9th (27th overall) and 10th (28th) to take a 4-up lead. Maccario won the 12th (30th) and

13th (31st) and made birdie on the 17th (35th) to cut it to 1 up, but Organisak was on the 18th (36th) green in three, and Maccario conceded after missing his par putt.

Organisak, 22, made his first appearance in the Mass Amateur championship final. The Sudbury native is a recent graduate of Emory University in Atlanta where he finished No. 2 for program scoring average, posting a mark of 73.04 strokes over 86 rounds of play. Organisak, a former standout at Lincoln-Sudbury High School, won the 2019 Francis Ouimet Memorial Tournament, and in 2016, qualified for the U.S. Amateur.

Maccario, 28, made his first appearance in the Mass Amateur championship final. He won the 2019 Mass Mid-Amateur championship and the 2019 Mass Four-Ball (with Mike Calef). He also played in the 2019 U.S. Amateur at Pinehurst No. 2 & No. 4 in North Carolina. He attended St. John's Prep in high school and also had a stint on the St. Anselm College men's golf team.

SPORTS, from page 7

ing, was scheduled to meet earlier this week to discuss a potential start date for fall sports.

Ludlow High School Athletic Director Tim Brillo was a former member of the Board of Directors, but lost his seat on July 1 with the re-districting.

"I'm not on the board anymore, but I am hopeful that we will be able to have a fall season," said Brillo.

While Massachusetts is still on a good trajectory with a low infection rate, fear of a spike or a "second wave" if too much activity is allowed, is what is driving some decisions about whether to allow athletics and whether or not some school will involve remote learning this fall.

Agawam High School Athletic Director David Stratton said there are other restrictions he will have to contend with. While there is no interstate travel involved, travel is going to be limited.

"We're only allowed to have a cer-

tain number of kids on the buses at a time," said Stratton. "That could limit our ability to have JV games on the road."

He said JV sports could be cancelled altogether, or JV squads could have geographically limited schedules or parents could be responsible for transportation.

He also said EEE (Eastern Equine Encephalitis) becomes a major factor as there are confirmed cases. He said the EEE wrinkle in the region could further limit sports because game times would have to be before dark until there is a frost.

Stratton said there is a possibility that sports like soccer and football could experience a delay, while sports not labeled as high a risk, like golf, cross country, and volleyball, could be allowed to play immediately.

"These are all things being discussed by the MIAA and its committees," said Stratton, who is part of the sports medicine sub-committee. "Hopefully we have will have some answers soon."

MASCAC, from page 7

or contract the virus."

"I am happy that we still be able to provide team activities through practices, conditioning and skill training," added Lenfest. "Athletics provides numerous benefits to our athletes, including strengthening their social networks, health, fitness, and general mental well-being through the benefit of exercise. Student-athletes will be able to train with their coaches, and while group sizes and activities may be modified to meet health guidelines, there is still the opportunity to reap the benefits provided by college athletics."

A decision on the winter sport seasons was deferred until September by the Council of Presidents.

The NCAA has issued several blanket waivers regarding eligibility. Student-athletes who's teams compete in less than 50 percent of that sports maximum allowable games for the fall 2020 season will not use a year of eligibility, so that Owl fall sport athletes who take part in team practices and activities will not lose a year of eligibility.

"The NCAA has acted swiftly to ensure that student-athletes do not unduly lose eligibility due to the pandemic's impact on competition," said Lenfest. "Our staff will be available to our athletes to answer any questions they have about eligibility."

The MASCAC is also investigating the ability to allow fall-season sports to compete in the spring, should public health conditions allow for it, pending NCAA rules.

"Ultimately, we are committed to providing the best experience and the safest experience for our student athletes," said Lenfest. "This fall, the safest option is to not compete in intercollegiate games, but we can provide the best possible experience given the current health situation by having team practices and training. We are fully committed to getting back to intercollegiate competition as quickly as possible, as allowed under the Conference and NCAA Guidelines, as well as local, State and Federal health guidelines permit."

Owl student athletes will not return to campus early for preseason in 2020, they will instead follow the Safe Fall Opening procedures established by the University, and team activities will start in early September. Coaches will be reaching out to their individual teams and players to further outline team plans and training schedules.

Westfield State athletics has consistently been the top program in the MASCAC. The Owls won the 2019-20 Howard C. Smith Cup, signifying the best overall athletics program in the league based on regular season records, and the Owls have claimed the Cup five times in the last six years and nine times since 2007.

ACTIVITIES, from page 1

Children's Room, then they can set an appointment to pick up craft-kits, book bundles, and summer books. Once they arrive at the library, they can call to let them know they have arrived, and a bag of supplies will be brought out.

When they first started this program, the number of craft-kits were limited to ten, as they didn't know a level of interest yet. This week however they made fifty craft-kits available for more kids to take part. Craft-kits include activities everything kids will need to make sock puppets and grow their own flowers. In addition, for-fun activities during the summer, the library also helps with kids' summer reading. The schools inform the library of what books will be used, and the library includes those books in the curb-side-pickup program.

However, there is a limited number of copies so kids and parents should start checking out the library's selection sooner rather than later. A big help will be included as some libraries have recently opened their inter-library loan system. Though not all libraries typically included are participating, as some have higher risks of COVID. School and summer reading books can be obtained from the inter-library loan program, and when Holyoke Library receives the books they will put them in quarantine for a few days to stay safe. The Children's Room is encouraging kids to read by offering prizes for summer reading, these prizes can be handed out in the curb-side-pickup bags or at the end of

the program all together.

Parents and kids can sign up for summer reading on the Library's website, under the Children's Room page. There are also e-books available that kids can read and log for their summer reading. Kids can also log their reading times online, or have their parents call the Children's Room to have the time's logged there. "We're trying to get kids to read for thirty minutes a day, of course reading longer is encouraged," Hayes said. "We're trying to be more accessible during this time, as we know not everyone has access to a screen and some people may be sick of looking at a screen."

The ScienceTellers are a group that typically comes to the Children's Room to do demonstrations, but they have recorded some videos for kids and parents to watch online. It includes fun science experiments that kids can follow along with at home. At first the Library was thinking of having time slots to air the demonstrations, but they understand that not everyone is available at the same time. So instead the performers recorded episodes to leave up on the website for people to watch at any time. The upcoming video from the ScienceTellers will include the dragon's return of the ice sorcerous and will include a set up for those at home to follow. The Library staff are also offering webinars and are working to sanitize, rearrange, and set up the library for its eventual re-opening. For more information, or to request any of these materials people can email cscope@holyokelibrary.org or they can call the Library at 413-420-8101 and ask for the Children's Room.

PVTA, from page 1

one reason for holding off on fare re-introduction.

"Only 14% of the PVTA operating budget comes from fares, and much less so during this pandemic as work commuting has been significantly reduced. CARES Act funds are meant to serve as a tool to mitigate the impact of Coronavirus with a special need to focus on the most vulnerable of our residents. Thousands of people in the Pioneer Valley are reliant on the PVTA to get to work or critical appointments. The cost and hassle of paying a fare during the current crisis is punitive and unnecessary."

The issue of fare-free public transportation has also been gaining traction in the Commonwealth in recent years with the City of Lawrence eliminating fares

on multiple bus lines this past September leading to a 24% increase in ridership.

"One of the greatest drivers of systemic inequality in our country and region is the continued subsidization of car travel and our failed investment in public transportation infrastructure. We have an opportunity to utilize these federal funds to help repair our broken system, and it starts with keeping our busses fare-free through this pandemic, and hopefully beyond."

The Mayor reached out to the Administrator of the PVTA, Sandra Sheehan as well as the Chair of the Board, Mayor David Narkewicz of Northampton prior to releasing this statement.

"I hope they will reconsider their decision prior to July 19," said Morse. "It's a small yet impactful way to help thousands of people who need it the most."

SCHOOL, from page 1

Our hope is to bring every student to school every day, with the appropriate safety guidelines. We are also planning a remote option for families who are not yet ready for their child(ren) to attend school in person and a hybrid option, where students have both in-person and remote learning, if the situation requires it.

We urgently need family input to guide our planning for a successful school year 20-21. You are a critical partner to ensure that we can safely meet the academic and social-emotional needs of your children, our students. Please take 5 minutes to complete this survey. Parents/care-

givers are encouraged to take the survey for each child; however, if you are able to just take the survey once, please take it with all your children in mind. The survey will close on Wednesday, July 15 at 5 p.m.

We will keep you updated throughout the summer as plans for SY20-21 continue to develop; please remember to read the weekly Reopening Leadership Team Updates that are included in the Holyoke Updates. Importantly, please keep us informed of any changes to your contact information by completing this form, and be sure that your child is up-to-date with their physical examination and all immunizations (Spanish) and their physical examination.

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DERBY, from page 1

fish to beat on Saturday was 13 ounces, one of the bigger fishes for kids.

The post members wear masks inside and have hand sanitizer accessible, they have one fish entry at a time. Where a fish is brought in and weighed, after that weight is written down the fish is placed

in a regulated cooler until it is loaded onto a truck and brought back to be released into the Connecticut River. The post members specifically said that they only accept live fish as they release them afterwards. "The first year I worked the derby I had a truck and I was assigned to drive the fish back to the river, in their individual coolers," Gariepy said. "I asked a fellow releaser for help, thinking I had to drag the cooler to the river edge. He stuck his hand in and grabbed the

fish to put it in the river, I choose to bring the cooler to the river edge."

Typically, the post will have t-shirts for sale, signifying the annual derby. The front is always the same as it advertises the derby, while the back of the shirt is different every year. Typically, those who buy the t-shirts get an invitation to a party later on in the season, while tickets are sold to others. This year however the derby is going to hold a socially distant party outside, where everyone is invited to join. The post is trying to keep spirits up and were excited to continue the Annual Catfish Derby during a time where many things were cancelled.

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ADVANCING YOUR HEALTH

TAX-FREE, from page 1

Retail items of up to \$2,500 purchased in Massachusetts for personal use on these two days will be exempt from sales tax. Items that do not qualify for the sales tax holiday exemption include motor vehicles, tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, and gas, among others.

"I've always thought people should be able to keep more of their hard-earned money. The annual sales tax holiday is an opportunity for people to do just that," said Boldyga. "The tax-free weekend will be an opportunity for people to buy local, support a small business, and make a purchase that they might not be able to otherwise afford." Representative Boldyga represents the 3rd Hampden District, which consists of the city of Agawam and towns of Granville, and Southwick. He can be reached at (413) 569-3137 Ext 103 or via email at Nicholas.Boldyga@mahouse.gov.

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